



Speech by

Mrs J. GAMIN

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

Hansard 26 May 1999

CONVICTED CHILD SEX OFFENDERS; NOTIFICATION ORDERS

Mrs GAMIN (Burleigh—NPA) (6.07 p.m.): It is more with sorrow than with anger that I find myself standing here this evening debating an issue that we should not have been forced to bring back to this House. Ten years after legislation has been introduced we should not have to stand here defending and promoting the use of that law.

Section 19 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act was introduced in 1989 because it was recognised that convicted paedophiles might not necessarily reform during their prison term. It was recognised that some paedophiles are repeat offenders and, although their prison sentence had been served, there could be a risk that they may reoffend.

This law was not introduced to segregate convicted paedophiles from the rest of society. It was not introduced, as has been suggested in the past by some sectors of the media, to create paedophile ghettos. On the contrary, it was introduced to protect the offended—the innocent victims and the innocent potential victims of these predatory offenders. It was introduced to protect the children of our community.

In the 10 years since its introduction, section 19 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act has certainly not been abused. We have not seen convicted paedophiles hounded out of society or their communities as a result of this law. In fact, we have not seen the law used much at all over the past 10 years. The Goss Government completely forgot about it. The Borbidge Government, under the guidance of Denver Beanland, used the law to help protect victims and potential victims of sexual abuse. It looks as though the Beattie Government has developed section 19 dementia. When questioned on the use of the law, Attorney-General Matt Foley seemed totally unaware of this major provision of the law within his jurisdiction.

The enforcement of this law has dissipated and we on this side of the House want it enforced. We want the Beattie Government to make a commitment to the people of Queensland that it will undertake to protect the children of this State. We want the Beattie Government to promise the people of Queensland that it will make sure that Attorney-General Matt Foley enforces the law as it is written in the Criminal Code. We want the Beattie Government to enforce the laws of this State.

So members can see why I regret this debate. I regret the fact that I have to encourage the members of this House to defend and encourage the use of a 10-year-old law. I regret the fact that I have to support a motion to enforce a law that was designed 10 years ago to provide a modicum of protection for our children. I regret the fact that I am a member of a Parliament that has to revisit and reinstate a law introduced 10 years ago to shield our children from predatory sex offenders.

This motion should not be on our agenda. We should not be having this debate. Instead, the Queensland community should be confident that legislation introduced into this House will be enforced. Our constituents should be assured that we, as their parliamentary representatives, will uphold and enforce the law as it is written. We should not have to waste valuable time re-arguing legislation that was debated, passed and proclaimed 10 years ago.

This is not a motion to introduce a new, radical reform, it is not a motion to promote a particular party policy; it is a motion to support the enforcement of a 10-year-old law, to support legislation that has already been introduced into this House. If we as leaders of our society are unable to assure our

community that laws we enshrine in legislation are enforceable, then how can we require a community to uphold these laws? What right do we have as the elders of our State to compel our community to live by the laws we initiate when we refuse to do so ourselves?

This House has a clear responsibility to the people of Queensland to uphold the law—to provide them with a safe, secure environment and to enforce section 19 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act. I should not have to stand here and argue for the right of a law that this House inscribed in 1989. I should not have to make a case to enforce a law that provides specifically for the protection of the children of Queensland. I should not have to be exhorting the advantages of implementing legislation that allows our community to work in safe, secure environments. I would much rather have the confidence of knowing that, when the Queensland Parliament passes legislation, the Queensland community can rely on us, their parliamentary representatives, to uphold the law.

Therefore, I declare my support for the motion to enforce the application of section 19 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act as moved by the member for Warwick not only because I support the community's need to be made aware of the presence of convicted sexual offenders within their society but also because I heartily endorse the Queensland Government's requirement to enforce the law.
